

Traditional Home service Sunday 28th March (Palm Sunday)

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty and everlasting God,
who in your tender love towards the
human race sent your Son our Saviour
Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh
and to suffer death upon the cross:
grant that we may follow the example of
his patience and humility, and also be
made partakers of his resurrection;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us admit to God the sin which always
confronts us.

**My God, for love of you I desire to hate
and forsake all sins by which I have
ever displeased you;
and I resolve by the help of your grace
to commit them no more;
and to avoid all opportunities of sin.
Help me to do this, through Jesus
Christ our Lord. Amen.**

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the
name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to
God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms,
hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (Hosanna, Hosanna)

READINGS - John 12.12-16
Psalm 118.1-2,19-24

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth. I believe in
Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who
was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of
the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius
Pilate, was crucified, died, and was
buried; he descended to the dead. On
the third day he rose again; he ascended
into heaven, he is seated at the right
hand of the Father, and he will come to
judge the living and the dead. I believe in
the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness
of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Spend some time praying for our nation,
our community and our families.*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your
name, your kingdom come, your will be
done, on earth as in heaven. Give us
today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver
us from evil. For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours, now and for
ever. Amen.

HYMN 2 (*All glory, laud, and honour*)

CONCLUSION

The peace of God, which passes all
understanding, keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

Hosanna, Hosanna,
Hosanna in the highest
Hosanna, Hosanna,
Hosanna in the highest
Lord we lift up Your Name,
With hearts full of praise,
Be exalted Oh Lord our God,
Hosanna in the highest.

Glory, Glory, Glory to the King of Kings
Glory, Glory, Glory to the King of Kings
Lord we lift up Your Name,
With hearts full of praise,
Be exalted Oh Lord our God,
Glory to the King of Kings.

Carl Tuttle

All glory, laud, and honour
To thee, Redeemer, King
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet hosannas ring

Thou art the King of Israel
Thou David's royal Son
Who in the Lord's name comest
The King and Blessed One

The company of angels
Are praising Thee on high
And mortal men and all things
Created make reply

The people of the Hebrews
With palms before Thee went
Our praise and love and anthems
Before Thee we present

To Thee, before Thy passion
They sang their hymns of praise
To Thee, now high exalted
Our melody we raise

Thou didst accept their praises
Accept the love we bring
Who in all good delightest
Thou good and gracious King

Sermon Notes - Adrian Morton
John 12.12-16 Palm Sunday
Season of rebuilding...

On this Palm Sunday I want to take the opportunity to speak about the season we are in as a church.

All of our churches have now decided when and how they are opening for Sunday morning 'in-person' worship.

Details are in the newsletter...

And it seems to me as we start to do that we are in a season of rebuilding.

So we should be asking ourselves questions such as:

'Are we simply going to return to what we did previously?'

'What have we learnt over this past year which means we need to do something differently?'

'What place is there for online ministry and mission?'

There are real practical issues to be resolved.

So at Wollaston for example, do we re-start Oddiebodies, the mums and tots group?

Can we?

What about other groups, activities that each of our churches used to do?

Are they still relevant?

I heard on the news this week how loneliness has obviously been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Moving forward, how as a church can we help with that?

What about mental health issues, again these have increased over the past year?

So there is much to think about.

Our own Bishop Donald has recently said to all clergy,

"I hope nobody is saying or thinking, *Let's get back to the way we were*. That would indicate a failure to learn, a failure to see and

take opportunities, a failure of nerve and of trust."

And he went on to talk about the need for a "mixed-mode" of church.

And he was referring to online and in-person church...

Over the next few months we'll be holding our annual church meetings and electing new PCC members.

And its an opportunity for these new PCC's to engage with these type of questions...

I want to give two further thoughts to help us in this season of rebuilding...

1. The first is the need to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus.

In this Palm Sunday reading, we hear how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey's colt.

With a huge crowd waving palm branches and cheering him on...

And off course the road was to lead to his death..

In v16 it says this:

"At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realise that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him."

So here we have this group of Jesus followers, really not understanding what was really happening.

Yet they were still following him.

Why, well it was because they found Jesus compelling.

They had experienced enough of Him to realise that who he was, the words he said, the things he did, made sense of the ordinariness of life.

More than that, Jesus gave life, made life more meaningful, purposeful, fulfilling.

So even though they didn't understand they still followed Him.
They still kept their gaze on him.

I was reminded recently of a 2 Chronicles story about King Jehoshaphat.

Two other kings came to make war on Him.
Yet he sought the Lord about it.

In 2 Chronicles 20v12 he says, "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you."

In this rebuilding season, we really may not understand or know how the future is going to pan out.

We may even be crying out, "Lord, we do not know what to do."

And that's ok, if we then cry out, "but our eyes are on you."

One thing I have learned in following Jesus is that living with uncertainty, living with not understanding is part of the deal with following Jesus.

And its ok as long as we keep our gaze on Him.

And actually uncertainty and not understanding, I think, is part of Gods plan to ensure we do keep our eyes on Him.

The One who is certain, the One who does understand.

And we'll keep our gaze on Him if we find Him compelling.

Practically for me, worship help me do that...
Gathering to worship, seeking His presence helps me keep my gaze on Him.

Helps me also to find Him compelling...

So whatever we do corporate worship needs to be in the mix!

The second thought to help us in this season of rebuilding comes from a talk I recently heard during an online New Wine leadership conference.

It was by a guy called James Smith, I think he was a professor of philosophy somewhere...

Anyway, he was talking about the secular culture we are living in.

And what he said was, that whilst this predominately secular culture doesn't believe in God, people find secular life kind of unsatisfying.

To the extent that many people hanker after something that is mystical, or other worldly, transcendent.

Which is simply the search for something beyond or above the range of normal or physical human experience.

And he quoted someone who summed this up with the phrase, "I don't believe in God, but I miss him."

Which is a great phrase...

And James Smith suggested the way that plays itself out in our culture is that people love fairytales, or things like Harry Potter or Lord of the Rings, things that enchant us... things which point us to a world that is beyond us.

And of course, the point he was making is that the church has the opportunity to fulfil that longing.

To fulfil that hankering after something beyond us.

And he also said, that if the church simply relies on a message, no matter how inspirational that message is, it won't reach our secular culture.

Because there is no end of short inspirational messages out there that people can tap into. Particularly in our internet and social media world.

As a church, we simply cannot compete with it all.

I've probably spend too much time in lockdown watching YouTube videos about

rebuilding cars, or having engineering explained...

And I don't know about you, but if I start to watch something and it hasn't grabbed my attention within the first few minutes, seconds often, I'll move on to something else...

It's the nature of the digital world.

And there is so much material for people to watch.

For people to get small sound bites.
Small doses of inspiration for life.

But where the church has got a unique opportunity is for a church community, and he said it has to be a community of people;

One that offers a sense of belonging..

Where that church community also offers something beyond us.
Something transcendent that people can experience.

Now for me, to repeat what someone said about Wollaston a few years ago, to me that is about allowing the 'weird stuff' to happen.

Which is the Holy Spirit stuff...

That stuff which often we can't explain, often we don't even understand, yet is strangely compelling...

Because it seems to satisfy something deep within us.

So as we enter this season of rebuilding,

As we start the process of working out what the future will hold church wise..

Two thoughts..

Lets keep our gaze on Jesus...

Lets work out how we can encourage the transcendent, the other worldly in our midst...

Amen...